GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1278
ANSWERED ON:10.03.2005
ANCIENT LANGUAGES
Chaure Shri Bapu Hari;Ponnuswamy Shri Mohan

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of languages spoken all over the country particularly in Maharashtra as per official records;

(b) the criteria followed by the UNESCO for declaration of a language as classical language;

(c) whether it was revealed on the eve of the UNESCO's meeting on "Safeguarding the World's Intangible Heritage" that the future of the 80 percent of Indian languages is uncertain;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the Government proposes to declare certain ancient languages as classical languages;

(f) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government in this regard; and

(g) the measures taken by the Government for the survival of the least spoken Indian languages in the country?

Answer

MINISTER FOR INFORMATION & BROADCASTING AND CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY)

(a) According to the latest Census information 72 languages are spoken in Maharashtra.

(b) As per our information, no language has been declared classical by UNESCO.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e)& (f) The Government has already declared Tamil as a Classical language of India. A Committee of Linguistic Experts constituted by the Government for this purpose will consider claims for classical languages.

(g) The oral traditions of less spoken languages are sought to be safeguarded.